Mr. Jerry Urban
News Room
Houston Chronicle
P.O.Box 4260
Houston, TX 77210

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Dear Jerry,

"He was a very humane man," Stolley said of Abraham Zapruder. I was witness to his great humanity just before Thanksgiving, 1968, when I was interviewing him in his office.

I'd hardly had time to sit down when his secretary came in to tell him a woman she named had just quit and was asking to be paid.

My presence did not discourage his demonstration of his great humane feelings.

"Tell that bitch she's quitting at her convenience and I'll pay her at my convenience." Close to verbatim. It impressed me quite a bit.For Thanksgiving, too.

Man of real principle, too. Nothing could corrupt him or get him to testify to anything but the truth. And he did. Here's how.

The day of the assassination the Secret Service got a print of his film on a plane to Washington. (The official account is that the original and one print went to Life, via Chicago, where Life says that during the layover they made a black-and-white print; one Zapruder kept; and was given to the Secret Service.) With the print was a hand-lettered memo, almost illegible in the copy I got at the Archives. It quotes Zapruder as saying that he heard a bullet come from over his right shoulder. Then he testifies, knowing full well that the official story does not permit his observation. So, he testified that he used to believe that the shot came from over his right shoulder but it was explained to him that it hadn't. Honest, isn't it?

Good story. Thanks. I think this is the first time any paper, in almost 25 years, has reported how they have commercialized this great tragedy.

Stolley's explanation of the reversion of rights is self-serving and misleading.

The film had been pirated and was being shown on TV. Life had had its earlier and painful experiences in suing Bernard Geis for using sketches drawn from the film. If they had not reverted the rights they'd have had to sue a couple of TV nets and others, including Groden, Geraldo Rivera and me. Geis published Josiah Thompson's book and I used prints copied from the Commission's publication of the frames it used.

I wonder a bit about the 1967 copyright. Life's use was 1963. But maybe Henry, a tax lawyer, saw a benefit in having title held by a corporation.

Sincerely,

Harold

Harold Weisberg